

SECRETARIAT OF THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

REGIONAL MEETING OF HEADS OF PLANNING AND HEADS OF STATISTICS (HOPS)  
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 17-21 September 2007)

*Future directions for evidence-based decision making in the Pacific*

**INDICATORS FOR MONITORING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
(Document prepared by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community)

**PURPOSE**

1. This paper provides the background to the statistical information requirements of the recently formed SPC Human Development Programme (HDP) and outlines initiatives planned and currently being undertaken by the HDP in the area of collecting and using statistical information for informed decision making and planning. Many areas of interest to the HDP are not commonly considered to be 'standard' statistical outputs, particularly in emerging areas such as violence against women, CEDAW legislative compliance, aspects of youth health and citizenship, cultural development and peace and security. This paper explores the roles of national statistics offices, national planning offices as well as the line ministries involved in providing timely, reliable and accurate information (quantitative and qualitative) about development challenges for policy making and planning.

**BACKGROUND**

2. As recommended by the 2005 SPC Corporate Review in late 2006 the Human Development Programme (HDP) was formed through the integration of the Pacific Women's Bureau (PWB), the Pacific Youth Bureau (PYB), the Cultural Affairs Programme (CAP) and the Community Education and Training Centre (CETC). Like the Statistics and Demography Programme (SDP), the HDP is part of SPC's Social Resources Division (along with Public Health and the Regional Media Centre). The HDP has a very broad mandate to use an integrated and rights based approach to fostering social development focusing on women, youth and culture while recognising the multiple sectors impacting on human development.

In addition stakeholders directed HDP to coordinate and develop strategic partnerships with civil society and traditional networks in programme activities<sup>1</sup>. The HDP is tasked with monitoring progress on empowering women and young people as endorsed regionally and internationally: the Pacific Plan (in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat), the Pacific Platform for Action (PPA), the Pacific Youth Strategy, the Human Development Report set of indicators including the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) and the Gender Development Index (GDI), the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is also tasked to assist PICTs with the protection of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture and one responsibility of the HDP is to develop a framework to quantify expressions of culture, including in terms of monetary contributions to PICTs economy. In undertaking these tasks it recognises that many of these regional development frameworks overlap in terms of the some of the indicators used to monitor them.

3. A number of HDP training, technical assistance and research activities involve partnerships with the Statistics and Demography Programme within SPC and at country level partnerships with National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and National Planning Offices (NPOs) and a key requirement is the availability of user-friendly statistical information and analysis. These partnerships involve both ongoing improvements to national statistical and planning systems within frameworks such as the MDGs and equally important, advocating for national policy development to incorporate research outcomes into emerging and cross sectoral issues. These issues include:
  - a) the lack of **gender analysis of existing statistical information** and the ‘gender blindness’ of policy development, particularly for policies promoting rural development where the needs of women are often not considered in policy development;
  - b) the need for more **analysis of existing statistical information for youth** and the policy development to address the specific social problems of youth (including vocational training, underemployment, sexual abuse, narcotics use etc), noting that government resources for the youth sector are very limited and many youth development activities occur within the civil society sector;
  - c) the need for more **analysis into the causes and outcomes of urbanisation and urban drift** within PICTs within national population policies;
  - d) the need for **more analysis of labour mobility and social protection issues** associated with regional and international labour mobility;
  - e) the need for **research, analysis, and dissemination of information on women’s role in peace and security** in PICTs,
  - f) The need for information about the **social and economic impacts of cultural industries and cultural tourism**.

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<sup>1</sup> Report on the Human Development Programme Planning Meeting, 24-26 January, 2007, Noumea, New Caledonia.

4. To address these issues a number of HDP projects are already and will continue to be directly involved with either collecting data on emerging issues or making better use of existing data collections to analyse vulnerable groups (women, youth, elderly, disabled, those in remote areas and so on) within PICTs. Most of the HDP focal points in PICTs – including civil society organisations – do not have the human resources or the capacity to meet or make significant contributions towards regional and international reporting requirements, and in many cases do not utilise statistical information and indicators in national reporting and development planning. In general there is little systematic evidence based (i.e. statistical) monitoring and evaluation of social development and equality initiatives as contained in plans, policies, programmes etc.
5. For example the importance of gender statistics was highlighted in June 2007 at the Third Pacific Ministers Meeting on Women and the Tenth Triennial Conference of Pacific Women where the meeting acknowledged the importance of evidence-based decision making, and: i) encouraged donors to support governments, local, national and regional organisations, institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and civil society to produce, publish and disseminate research and results, including research on gender roles, to influence policy and promote advocacy on women's human rights and empowerment; and ii) supported the research activities of local and international NGOs and civil society, which can provide new insights to inform the development of policies and programmes aimed at achieving gender equality and the elimination of poverty in the Pacific. The importance of "gender statistics and indicators for measuring progress" was highlighted further as an agenda item with a key recommendation to urge governments, SPC and other organisations to support ongoing work to strengthen the capacity of national statistics offices to establish, update and use – in close consultation with women's machineries and stakeholders – gender statistics and indicators disaggregated by ethnicity, age, disability, employment status and other relevant factors.<sup>2</sup>
6. The HDP is implementing a project to develop a core set of gender statistics and indicators with the ultimate goal that national women's machineries would be able to report on these regularly as a means of monitoring the empowerment of women and gender equality. The statistical information and indicators targets both the minimum expected outputs from the national statistical system (national statistics office, ministries of health, education and labour, finance and so on) and the critical information needs for gender disaggregated information in key plans and agreements that are not just gender related but cut across other sectors such as youth. Obviously country specific statistical information can be integrated as necessary into the proposed statistical framework.

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<sup>2</sup> A copy of the Outcomes of the Ministerial and Conference deliberations is attached as Annex 1.

7. An important and related project of the HDP which has begun in the Solomon Islands and Kiribati involves socio-cultural research into gender based violence and child abuse in these countries. These studies will identify country-specific causes and consequences of domestic violence and protective mechanisms against it; enable regional and international comparisons; and, most importantly, help to develop appropriate interventions to reduce the prevalence of GBV and its impacts on families, including children. This project will also lay the ground-work for more detailed studies into child abuse and other forms of violence against children. Like the gender statistics work, it is being carried out in close collaboration with NSOs, Planning Offices and key stakeholders in government, the community including the churches and faith-based organisations and legal and law-enforcement agencies.
8. The HDP has been tasked by SPC's governing council to quantify and qualify the extent of the 'Youth Challenge' in the Pacific Region. The first step is identifying priorities, gaps, resource needs and stakeholders working with youth in the region, through a mapping of all stakeholders whose work involves or may involve young people, including all SPC programmes as well as other regional organisations, development partners, national governments and stakeholders. This Pacific Youth Mapping Exercise is near completion, and the surveys and indicator analysis are capturing actual flows of resources and activities demonstrating real priorities and action. The next step is to display all information collected in an accessible and searchable database which is expected to assist in planning and coordination, and provide an effective tool for monitoring and evaluation, displaying evidence based best practice as well as lessons learnt. A set of youth specific indicators has been developed in partnership with SDP using existing data to create a comparable baseline for all PICTs. These Youth specific indicators will be incorporated into PRISM under a new sub section for Human Development indicators, with a future vision that all Human development indicators previously highlighted would be available there and highly visible.

## **DISCUSSION POINTS**

9. The meeting is invited to comment on the role of PICT statistics and planning agencies to:
  - a) address unmet needs of social sector agencies in government and civil society for timely, reliable and user-friendly statistical information (quantitative and qualitative) for informed decision making, policy development and advocacy activities;
  - b) meet specific information needs pertaining to the monitoring of human development (particularly in the areas of women and youth and other vulnerable groups) and address national and international reporting requirements;
  - c) develop human capacity in social development agencies, to compile, maintain and utilize social databases for ongoing monitoring and reporting activities in their sector;
  - d) assist in the analysis of data and effective dissemination of information pertaining to sensitive issues such as violence against women and the sexual abuse of children and youth.